## TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE Transcriber's Office FLOOR DEBATE

March 18, 2004 LB 1089

that is the reason. Otherwise, we have to make extremely severe And to me, and I'm going to get philosophical a little bit, but government is here, it's been here in Nebraska since 1867, it's going to be here until all of us are gone and into the future for our grandchildren and thereafter. I think we need a solid, stable, dependable, realistic government. And so, even though we have our cyclic up and downs, government, Nebraska government in this case, has got to be here and it's got to survive. And that implies our institutions have to survive. And that implies that our community colleges are there and are important, it implies our state colleges are there and important, and it provides that our university is here and important, which...and our educational system is important; all of these things. That's half our budget, just education alone. And we cannot afford to shortchange our future, and that's what the state exists for is to help educate its citizens and on and on. But that gets back to why we decided to balance the budget this way over a three-year span, so that we don't have a generation here that are going to be competing in increasingly intensively competitive world, that they're going to be shortchanged. And to me, it carries over into some other bills that are coming. The whatever the bill is on bringing Class I's in, it's not about dollars totally, it's about what kind of an education are we going to provide to our young people, wherever they're at. If they go to a four-person school or to a 4,000-person school, are they getting the kind of education they should? And that's what that should be about. And that's why this budget is built over several years. So that's somewhat philosophical, but that's ...

SENATOR SCHIMEK: One minute.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: ...the way I see our responsibility as legislators at this point. The only other...I'm not going to comment on the motion to suspend. If the body wants to do that, that will be their decision. I think we ought to have intense, broad-based discussion on this budget. That's perfectly fine with me. I honestly don't mind if it goes to midnight tonight and starts at 6:00 tomorrow morning. I'll go every bit that you want to discuss this budget. I don't want to cease debate because we didn't have time to do it. But if the body feels